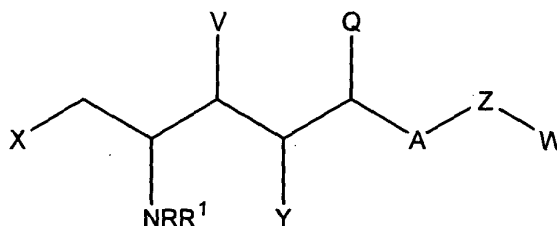


## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Derivatives of sphingolipids of the formula:



are provided wherein the substituents are as defined in the specification and wherein there is at least one  $R^2$  substituent in the sphingolipid derivative. The compounds are useful in the treatment of abnormal cell proliferation, including benign and malignant tumors, the promotion of cell differentiation, the induction of apoptosis, the inhibition of protein kinase C, and the treatment of inflammatory conditions, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease as well as proliferation of smooth muscle cells in the course of development of plaques in vascular tissue. The invention also includes a method for triggering the release of cytochrome c from mitochondria that includes administering an effective amount of a sphingolipid or its derivative or prodrug to a host in need thereof. Further, the invention provides a method for treating bacterial infections, including those that influence colon cancer and other disorders of the intestine, that includes administering an effective amount of one of the active compounds identified herein.